



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Commemoration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1300th meeting of the Permanent Council,
28 January 2021

Madam Chairperson,

The delegation of Ukraine joins previous speakers in warmly welcoming Ambassador Michaela Küchler, Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, to the Permanent Council and thanks her for the presentation.

On 27 January, the world commemorated the International Holocaust Remembrance Day – a truly horrible chapter in human history, which serves as a powerful global reminder about the danger of war and the value of peace, about the menace of hate and the fundamental importance of tolerance.

The memory of this atrocious tragedy resonates deeply in the Ukrainian society as 1.5 million Ukrainian Jews fell victims to the Holocaust. 60% of Ukraine's Jewish population perished during the Nazi's occupation.

Every year Ukraine honours all victims of the Holocaust on 27 January as official "Holocaust Memorial Day", established by the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On the 70th Anniversary of the Tragedy of Babyn Yar" - the horrible tragedy related to the Holocaust committed in Kyiv when it was occupied by Nazis.

In commemorating the victims of the Holocaust, the President, the Government and the Parliament of Ukraine reiterate their strong commitment to combating such scourges as anti-Semitism, xenophobia, racism, intolerance and hate crimes.

This year, Ukraine will commemorate 80 years since the Babyn Yar tragedy. The remembrance events will be held at the national and local levels in close co-operation with the Jewish organizations and with broad involvement of the representatives of international community, civil society and academia. President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy has already signed a relevant decree on this issue.

The Head of Ukrainian State stressed the importance of honoring the memory of the Holocaust victims in Ukraine and supported the construction of the Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center in Kyiv. This initiative is not just a monument, it will be a remarkable memorial, where there will be both a museum and a research center, which will promote tolerance in society. "Many Ukrainians hold the high title of Righteous Among the Nations. These are Ukrainians who saved Jews during the Holocaust often at the cost of their own lives. The creation of a memorial is very important for our country. There were many tragic pages in its history. However, we must remember them, tell them to our future generations," Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated.

Madam Chairperson,

Ukraine firmly condemns any attempts to deny the Holocaust, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We believe that for the OSCE and it is long overdue to adopt a working definition of anti-Semitism, endorsed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

We encourage the Swedish OSCE Chairpersonship to steer the efforts towards the adoption of respective OSCE document.

Distinguished colleagues,

The International Day in memory of the victims of the Holocaust is an occasion to strongly condemn the ongoing gross violations of our common values, commitments and principles, as well as to reaffirm our commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea and on-going aggression in Donbas amply demonstrate that blatant breach of international law by one country inflicts grave damage to democratic stability, human rights and peace in the entire Europe.

Persecution of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians, labelling different ethnic representative bodies as extremist, attacks on religious grounds, militarisation of school education, attempts to change the demographic composition and erase the ethnic and national identity of large groups of the population demonstrate the extent of repressions in the occupied Crimea.

We cannot and must not close our eyes to the plight of the people under illegal Russian occupation.

I wish to conclude my statement by decisively reiterating Ukraine's strong commitment to the pledges of "we remember" and "never again". We must ensure by our collective efforts that the lessons of the past are not forgotten and that fighting anti-Semitism and any form of intolerance, discrimination or hatred ultimately succeed.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.